

VERMONT TELEGRAPH.

TWO DOLLARS PER ANNUM.]

"I AM SET FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL."

[PAYABLE WITHIN FOUR MONTHS]

BY ORSON S. MURRAY.

BRANDON, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 1839.

VOL. XII. NO. 14

VERMONT TELEGRAPH.

BRANDON, SATURDAY, DEC. 23, 1838.

Extracts from the Missionary Herald.

THE OPIUM TRADE.

It has been promulgated that whoever hereafter lives in Canton, as merchant, must come under a regulation which makes him responsible for the introduction of opium to the loss of life and property; and that no one can abide there who will not so bind himself. This regulation is truly Chinese; for they have many laws pertaining of this nature of responsibility for the actions of others, and suppose that foreigners will also consent. But as no one can think of living there and be responsible for all the opium that may appear on the coast, to the imminent hazard of all they own, it is rumored that all foreigners will quit Canton. With the impression that the commissioner will enforce this law, many are packing up all their chattels and loading their ships, and others defer any further operations till the result can be foreseen a little clearer. The Americans had no opium to deliver, but all are included in the same sentence; neither has the commissioner made any distinction at any time between those who traded and those who have not. A short period will decide.

Doct. Parker's hospital remains closed, the road to it being also walled up, and it is very uncertain when it can be again opened. Our teachers in Canton have all left, and the scholars, for the third time since a school was first gathered, have all fled. All distribution of books of course ceased immediately. To what extent operations can be resumed in Canton can not be determined.

But while partial distress must ensue upon the cessation of a trade worth six millions of dollars annually, we can not but rejoice at the check this traffic has received. It was draining the country of its wealth, and giving in exchange death and disease; a drug so noxious that not one of its advocates would consent to use it at all, while they say it does the Chinese no harm. It was raising up a coast guard of desperate smugglers, whom the good sense of the better part of the Chinese themselves would gladly see destroyed, and who would form a great barrier to the extension of a fair trade, while the government would not admit it legally. It was bringing yearly great additional duties upon the trade at Canton, thus making all pay for the sins of a few, and ultimately taxing the consumer in England and America to pay for the extension of the opium trade. It was destroying the bodies of the Chinese by thousands; rendering the body politic corrupt in morals, because the use of the drug was prohibited, and consequently must be indulged covertly, and all possible devices employed to escape punishment. It was killing the people in a far greater degree than we can exactly tell, but from all that we can learn, to a frightful extent. It was opposing a barrier to all our efforts to do them good, that no human science, skill, or zeal could overcome; for it rendered the people heedless of all instruction, steeped them in the odor of the grave, and soon introduced them to its precincts. We were implicated, as foreigners, in the misdeeds of other foreigners, and thus disabled from exerting that influence for good that precedes the reception of instruction. We saw no prospect of good to be done for them, while this trade stood in the way; for with one hand books containing exhortations to repent were freely scattered, and with the other a luxury introducing death and disease easily sold. We can not but feel rejoiced to see it receive so severe a blow, though it may not be wholly destroyed at once. Its character is well exhibited in the fact, that while foreigners are confined in Canton, their lives threatened, if the trade is not stopped, and all the opium delivered, still the ships in the outer anchorage are engaged in selling it, and under cover of night delivering it. This the commissioner hears of, and charges the infraction of the pledge signed, that there shall be no more sold by the foreigners in Canton, upon them and the British superintendent, upbraiding them with their want of good faith.

It is thought by some that England will resent this spoliation of the Chinese government, but the moral sense of the people of the British Isles will have but little sympathy with the disappointments of those engaged in the opium trade. They will rather applaud the firmness of the Chinese, and overlook any little breach of the so-called law of nations in considering their efforts to throw off such an incubus of death. Our prayer is, that God, whose hand is here so signally visible, will overrule all the changes to his own glory, and the good of China.—*Letter from Mr. Williams.*

SOUTHERN INDIA.

In a moral aspect, the most hopeless class, as is true throughout India, are the Mussulmans. Yet even these come occasionally to our houses to obtain books and converse on the subject of religion. On the Sabbath we have usually had from forty to fifty at our public services. A portion of these are persons connected with the mission, and the remainder are

from the village. Sometimes a little discussion will take place, in which several will engage, while the rest listen in silent attention, occasionally expressing their assent or dissent by significant gestures, or a single ejaculation. A few weeks since, while speaking on the subject of sacrifices, we came to that of Christ. Why did he offer his life as a sacrifice? I asked. "To save sinners," was the answer. Are we all sinners? "Yes." Still, though we have sinned, may we not by good works, such as building temples and choultries, making thanks, giving charity, and doing penance, etc., save ourselves without the assistance of Christ? A low caste man answered, "No, we can by no means save ourselves." But another person, who had for many years been the disciple of a sanyassee, and of course felt himself very righteous, said it was in our power to save ourselves. As different opinions had been given, I said, I will state a case and let you decide for yourselves. A person was in debt to a merchant to the amount of a thousand rupees; but being unable to pay, he went to his creditor with a frank acknowledgment that he had squandered his money and could not pay his debts. But, said he, for the future I will pay immediately for all that I buy, on condition that you will consider this as cancelling my former debts. In such a case would the merchant be likely to act? Would he comply with the request of the debtor? "No," What then? "He would put him in prison." I can see but one way of escape for the debtor, I said, and that is for some rich friend to step forward and pay his debt. As I closed, the eyes of the sanyassee brightened with interest. "Ah," said he, I see how it is: we are all sinners against God, and cannot pay any of our debts. But Jesus Christ comes with his grace to pay what we could not, and so delivers us from condemnations. Is it not so? This question afforded a fine opportunity of showing the preciousness of Christ, as the only Savior, and all seemed to feel that there was help in no other.—*Letter from Mr. Tracy.*

OREGON INDIANS.

Reception of Messrs. Eells & Walker. On arriving at the river (the Flathead river) we saw a number of lodges, and in the center a large number of people collected, and arranged in order to give us a warm reception. When we approached them, one in advance of the rest stepped up and gave me his hand.—He was followed by all the rest, until we had shaken hands with about 120 men, women, and children. Many were the thanks they gave us for coming to their place. Some held my hand so long and pressed it so hard, that I was compelled by the pain it gave me to withdraw it.

After the shaking of hands was over, which you may suppose produced considerable effect, we dismounted from our horses, sang a verse, then had a prayer, and moved off to a place to encamp.—The Indians, unasked, brought in our mules, unpacked them, cut and brought us a large quantity of wood, and did everything in their power to do.

I observed in the center of these lodges one uncommonly large, at least thirty feet long, which I supposed belonged to the chief. Just as the sun was going down I heard a strange noise, the nature and cause of which I did not understand.—Soon it was explained by seeing the whole village flocking to this tent, and hearing some one, in answer to our inquiring looks, say they were going to worship. I said within myself, Had the same bell been rung in one of our villages in Christian America, how few of the people would have gone! And I must say the conduct of these Indians was a reproach to our most orderly congregations. Soon we heard singing and then prayer, and then they closed with singing. We were at that time at supper, or else I think I should have ventured in. I fully agree with a remark of Mr. Eells, that if the churches at home could have witnessed the scenes of this day, they would have been filled with wonder and joy. The Indians appeared deeply interested during worship on the Sabbath. We were able through an interpreter to communicate something to them, or rather to him, by signs, and he to them. He had been considerably at Mr. Spalding's, and heard a number of Bible stories, especially the story of Christ crucified.—*Letter from Mr. Walker.*

INSTRUCTIONS TO MR. DIBBLE.

Perhaps the committee ought not to bring these counsels to a close, without adverting to the extraordinary number of native converts admitted to the church during the late revival at the islands.—Whatever the result may be, there can be no doubt that there was an error in several of the churches in receiving members upon so short a probation. And there is strong reason to apprehend serious evils in those churches, as the result of that error. But the danger most apprehended by the committee is, that Satan will take advantage of evils to betray the brethren into mutual crimination, and thus give rise to alienation and divisions in the mission. Let the first symptoms of so monstrous an evil be met on all hands by that heaven-born spirit, which leads the possessors in holiness of mind to esteem others better than themselves, and which is a spirit of love and conciliation of irresistible power to bind together the hearts of good men. Better disband those churches altogether, than suffer

them to become the occasion of disunion among yourselves. But should the churches to which we refer, disappoint our fears and, through a miracle of grace, adorn their profession, we must still entreat the brethren to avoid the repetition of so fearful a risk in future; if for no other reason, out of deference to the views and feelings of the great body of their patrons. The tidings of that glorious work of the Spirit at the Sandwich Islands, has exerted far less influence among us than it would have done, had there been no precipitancy in admitting members into some of the churches, even had the number of admissions been not half as great as it was.

RECEIPTS TO THE TREASURY OF THE BOARD.

It seems desirable that the patrons of the Board should know how the receipts into the treasury for a few months just past compare with the receipts during the corresponding months of the preceding year; and for this purpose the following tabular view is given:

	1838	1839
June, - - -	\$13,724	\$9,907
July, - - -	23,642	17,023
Aug., - - -	11,035	9,843
Sept., - - -	15,843	13,047
Oct., - - -	23,437	13,647
	\$92,732	\$58,457

Showing an excess in the receipts into treasury during five months, ending 31st October, 1839, over those of the corresponding months of 1838, of \$21,865; giving a monthly average in 1838, of \$18,546; and in 1839, of \$12,573; the monthly average for the five months of the year 1839 being about \$5,000 less than they were in 1838.

Three months of the current financial year, ending 31st October, have now elapsed, and the donations received during that period have amounted to \$41,533.—The average amount of the donations during the corresponding months of the three years, (1836, 1837, and 1838,) was \$34,753; showing that the receipts for those three months this year are less, by \$13,214, than the average during the corresponding months of the three years preceding; and \$13,829 less than during the three corresponding months of the year 1838.

For October 1839, the receipts were \$18,647, while the average for the same month of the three years preceding was \$24,397, or about one-third greater. One quarter of the current financial year closed with the 31st of October last; during which it is seen that the donations to the treasury have fallen short of those for the first quarter of the previous financial year by \$13,829. Should the deficiency be as great during each of the remaining three quarters of the year, the amount for the current year would be less than for the last by more than \$55,000.

The average monthly expenditure in carrying forward the missions under the care of the Board is about \$24,000.

Religious Miscellany.

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

Chapter V. ON THE TESTIMONY OF SUBSEQUENT WITNESSES.

IV. But this brings us to the last division of the argument, viz. that the leading facts in the history of the Gospel are corroborated by the testimony of others.

The evidence we have already brought forward for the antiquity of the New Testament, and the veneration in which it was held from the earliest ages of the church, is an implied testimony of all the Christians of that period to the truth of the Gospel history. By proving the authenticity of St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, we not merely establish his testimony to the truth of the Christian miracles,—we establish the additional testimony of the whole church of Corinth, who would never have respected these Epistles, if Paul had ventured upon a falsehood so open to detection, as the assertion, that miracles were wrought among them, which not a single individual ever witnessed. By proving the authenticity of the New Testament at large, we secure, not merely that argument, which is founded on the testimony and concurrence of its different writers, but also the testimony of those immense multitudes, who, in distant countries, submitted to the New Testament as the rule of their faith. The testimony of the teachers, whether we take into consideration the subject of that testimony, or the circumstances under which it was delivered, is of itself a stronger argument for the truth of the Gospel history, than can be alleged for the truth of any other history, which has been transmitted down to us from ancient times. The concurrence of the taught carries along with it a host of additional testimonies, which gives an evidence to the evangelized story, that is altogether unexampled. On a point of ordinary history, the testimony of Tacitus is held decisive, because it is not contradicted. The history of the New Testament is not only not contradicted, but confirmed by the strongest possible expressions which men can give of their acquiescence in its truth; by thousands who were either agents or eye-witnesses of the transactions recorded, who could not be deceived, who had no interest, and no glory to gain by supporting a falsehood, and who by their sufferings in the cause of what they professed to be their belief, gave the highest ev-

idence that human nature can give of sincerity.

In this circumstance, it may be perceived how much the evidence for Christianity goes beyond all ordinary historical evidence. A profane historian relates a series of events which happen in a particular age; and we count it well, if it be his own age, and if the history which he gives us be the testimony of a contemporary author. Another historian succeeds him at the distance of years, and, by repeating the same story, gives the additional evidence of his testimony to its truth. A third historian perhaps goes over the same ground, and lends another confirmation to the history. And it is thus, by collecting all the lights which are thinly scattered over the tract of ages and of centuries, that we obtain all the evidence which can be got, and all the evidence that is generally wished for.

Now, there is room for a thousand presumptions, which, if admitted, would overturn the whole of this evidence. For any thing we know, the first historians may have had some interest in disguising the truth, or substituting in its place a falsehood, and a fabrication. True, it has not been contradicted, but they form a very small number of men, who feel strongly or particularly interested in a question of history. The literary and speculative men of that age may have perhaps been engaged in other pursuits, or their testimonies may have perished in the wreck of centuries. The second historian may have been so far removed in point of time from the events of his narratives, that he can furnish us, not with an independent, but with a derived testimony. He may have copied his account from the original historian, and the falsehoods have come down to us in the shape of an authentic and well-attested history. Presumptions may be multiplied without end; yet in spite of them, there is a natural confidence in the veracity of man, which disposes us to as firm a belief in many of the facts of ancient history, as in the occurrences of the present day.

The history of the Gospel, however, stands distinguished from all other history by the uninterrupted nature of its testimony, which carries down its evidence, without a chasm, from its earliest promulgation to the present day. We do not speak of the superior weight and splendor of its evidences, at the first publication of that history, as being supported, not merely by the testimony of one, but by the concurrence of several independent witnesses. We do not speak of its subsequent writers, who follow one another in a far closer and more crowded train, than there is any other example of in the history or literature of the world. We speak of the strong though unwritten testimony of its numerous proselytes, who, in the very fact of their proselytism, give the strongest possible confirmation to the Gospel, and fill up every chasm in the recorded evidence of past times.

In the written testimonies for the truth of the Christian religion, Barnabas comes next in order to the first promulgators of the evangelical story. He was a contemporary of the apostles, and wrote a very few years after the publication of the pieces which make up the New Testament. Clement follows, who was a fellow-laborer of Paul, and writes an epistle in the name of the church of Rome, to the church of Corinth. The written testimonies follow one another with a closeness and a rapidity of which there is no example; but what we insist on at present, is the unwritten and implied testimony of the people who composed these two churches. There can be no fact better established, than that these two churches were planted in the days of the apostles, and that the Epistles which were respectively addressed to them, were held in the utmost authority and veneration. There is no doubt, that the leading facts of the Gospel history were familiar to them;—that it was in the power of many individuals amongst them to verify these facts, either by their own personal observation, or by an actual conversation with eye-witnesses; and that in particular, it was in the power of almost every individual in the church of Corinth, either to verify the miracles which St. Paul alludes to, in his epistle to that church, or to detect and expose the imposition, had there been no foundation for such an allusion. What do we see in all this, but the strongest possible testimony of a whole people to the truth of the Christian miracles? There is nothing like this in common history.—The formation of a society, which can only be explained by the history of the Gospel, and where the conduct of every individual furnishes a distinct pledge and evidence of its truth. And to have a full view of the argument, we must reflect, that it is not one, but many societies, scattered over the different countries of the world; that the principle upon which each society was formed, was the divine authority of Christ and his apostles, resting upon the recorded miracles of the New Testament; that these miracles were wrought with a publicity, and at a nearness of time, which rendered them accessible to the inquiries of all, for upwards of half a century; that nothing but the power of conviction could have induced the people of that age to embrace a religion so disgraced and so persecuted;—that every temptation was held out for its disciples to abandon it; and that though some of them, overpowered by the terrors of punishment, were driven to apostasy, yet not one of them has left us a testi-

mony which can impeach the miracles of Christianity, or the integrity of its first teachers.

It may be observed, that in pursuing the line of continuity from the days of the apostles, the written testimonies for the truth of the Christian miracles follow one another in closer succession, than we have any other example of in ancient history. But what gives such peculiar and unprecedented evidence to the history of the Gospel is, that in the concurrence of the multitudes who embraced it, and in the existence of those numerous churches and societies of men who espoused the profession of the Christian faith, we cannot but perceive, that every small interval of time between the written testimonies of authors is filled up by materials so strong and so firmly cemented, as to present us with an unbroken chain of evidence, carrying as much authority along with it, as if it had been a diurnal record, commencing from the days of the apostles, and authenticated through its whole progress by the testimony of thousands.

Every convert to the Christian faith in those days, gives one additional testimony to the truth of the Gospel history. Is he a Gentile? The sincerity of his testimony is approved by the persecutions, the sufferings, the danger, and often the certainty of martyrdom, which the profession of Christianity incurred. Is he a Jew? The sincerity of his testimony is approved by all these evidences, and in addition to them by this well known fact, that the faith and doctrine of Christianity were in the highest degree repugnant to the wishes and prejudices of that people. It ought never to be forgotten, that in as far as Jews are concerned Christianity does not owe a single proselyte to its doctrines, but to the power and credit of its evidences, and that Judea was the chief theatre on which these evidences were exhibited. It cannot be too often repeated, that these evidences rest not upon arguments, but upon facts; and that the time, and the place, and the circumstances, rendered these facts accessible to the inquiries of all who chose to be at the trouble of this examination. And there can be no doubt that this trouble was taken, whether we reflect on the nature of the Christian faith, as being so offensive to the pride and bigotry of the Jewish people, or whether we reflect on the consequences of embracing it, which were derision, and hatred, and banishment, and death. We may be sure, that a step which involved in it such painful sacrifices, would not be entered into upon light and insufficient grounds. In the sacrifices they made, the Jewish converts gave every evidence of having delivered an honest testimony in favor of the Christian miracles; and when we reflect, that many of them must have been eye-witnesses, and all of them had it in their power to verify these miracles, by conversation and correspondence with by-standers, there can be no doubt, that it was not merely an honest, but a competent testimony. There is no fact better established, than that many thousands among the Jews believed in Jesus and his apostles; and we have therefore to allege their conversion, as a strong additional confirmation to the written testimony of the original historians.

One of the popular objections against the truth of the Christian miracles, is the general infidelity of the Jewish people.—We are convinced, that at the moment of proposing this objection, an actual delusion exists in the mind of the infidel. In his conception, the Jews and the Christians stand opposed to each other. In the belief of the latter, he sees nothing but a party or an interested testimony, and in the unbelief of the former, he sees a whole people persevering in their ancient faith, and resisting the new faith on the ground of its insufficient evidences. He forgets all the while, that the testimony of a great many of these Christians, is in fact the testimony of Jews. He only attends to them in their present capacity.—He contemplates them in the light of Christians, and annexes to them all that suspicion and incredulity which are generally annexed to the testimony of an interested party. He is aware of what they are at present, Christians and defenders of Christianity; but he has lost sight of their original situation, and is totally unmindful of this circumstance, that in their transition from Judaism to Christianity, they have given him the very evidence he is in quest of. Had another thousand of these Jews renounced the faith of their ancestors, and embraced the religion of Jesus, they would have been equivalent to a thousand additional testimonies in favor of Christianity, and testimonies too of the strongest and most suspicious kind, that can well be imagined. But this evidence would make no impression on the mind of an infidel, and the strength of it is disguised, even from the eyes of the Christian. These thousands, in the moment of their conversion, lose the appellation of Jews, and merge into the name and distinction of Christians. The Jews, though diminished in number, retain the national appellation; and the obstinacy with which they persevere in the belief of their ancestors, is still looked upon as the adverse testimony of an entire people. So long as one of that people continues a Jew, his testimony is looked upon as a serious impediment in the way of Christian evidences. But in the moment he becomes a Christian, his motives are contemplated with distrust.—He is one of the obnoxious and suspected

party. The mind carries a reference only to what he is, and not to what he has been. It overlooks the change of sentiment, and forgets, that in the renunciation of old habits, and old prejudices, in defiance to sufferings and disgrace, in attachment to a religion so repugnant to the pride and bigotry of their nation, and above all, in submission to a system of doctrines which rested its authority on the miracles of their own time, and their own remembrance, every Jewish convert gives the most decisive testimony which man can give for the truth and divinity of our religion.

But why, then, says the infidel, did they not all believe? Had the miracles of the Gospel been true, we do not see how human nature could have held out against an evidence so striking and so extraordinary; nor can we at all enter into the obstinacy of that belief which is ascribed to the majority of the Jewish people, and which led them to shut their eyes against a testimony that no man of common sense could have resisted.

Many Christian writers have attempted to resolve this difficulty, and to prove that the infidelity of the Jews, in spite of the miracles which they saw, is perfectly consistent with the known principles of human nature. For this purpose, they have enlarged, with much force and plausibility, on the strength and inveteracy of the Jewish prejudices—on the bewildering influence of religious bigotry upon the understanding of men—on the woful disappointment which Christianity offered to the pride and interest of the nation—on the selfishness of the priesthood—and on the facility with which they might turn a blind and fanatical multitude, who had been trained, by their earliest habits, to follow and to revere them.

In the Gospel history itself, we have a very consistent account at least of the Jewish opposition to the claims of our Savior. We see the deeply wounded pride of a nation, that felt itself disgraced by the loss of its independence. We see the arrogance of its peculiar and exclusive claims to the favor of the Almighty. We see the anticipation of a great prince, who was to deliver them from the power and subjection of their enemies. We see their insolent contempt for the people of other countries, and the foulest scorn that they should be admitted to an equality with themselves in the honors and benefits of a revelation from heaven. We may easily conceive, how much the doctrine of Christ and his apostles was calculated to gall, and irritate, and disappoint them; how it must have mortified their national vanity; how it must have alarmed the jealousy of an artful and interested priesthood; and how it must have scandalized the great body of the people, by the liberality with which it addressed itself to all men, and to all nations, and raised to an elevation with themselves, those whom the firmest habits and prejudices of their country had led them to contemplate under all the disgrace and ignominy of outcasts.

Accordingly, we know, in fact, that bitterness, and resentment, and wounded pride, lay at the bottom of a great deal of the opposition, which Christianity experienced from the Jewish people. In the New Testament history itself, we see repeated examples of their outrageous violence; and this is confirmed by the testimony of many other writers. In the history of the martyrdom of Polycarp, it is stated, that the Gentiles and Jews inhabiting Smyrna, in a furious rage, and with a loud voice, cried out, "This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, the destroyer of our gods, who teaches all men not to sacrifice, nor to worship them!" They collected wood, and the dried branches of trees for his pile; and it is added, "the Jews also, according to custom, assisting with the greatest forwardness." It is needless to multiply testimonies to a point so generally understood; as that it was not conviction alone, which lay at the bottom of their opposition to the Christians; that a great deal of passion entered into it; and that their numerous acts of hostility against the worshippers of Jesus, carry in them all the marks of fury and resentment.

Now we know that the power of passion will often carry it very far over the power of conviction. We know that the strength of conviction is not in proportion to the quantity of evidence presented, but to the quantity of evidence attended to, and perceived, in consequence of that attention. We also know, that attention is, in a great measure, a voluntary act; and that it is often in the power of the mind, both to turn away its attention from what would land it in any painful or humiliating conclusion, and to deliver itself up exclusively to those arguments which flatter its taste and its prejudices. All this lies within the range of familiar and everyday experience. We all know how much it insures the success of an argument, when it gets a favorable hearing. In by far the greater number of instances, the parties in a litigation are not merely each attached to their own side of the question; but each confident and believing that theirs is the side on which justice lies.—In those contests of opinion, which take place every day between man and man, and particularly if passion and interest have any share in the controversy, it is evident to the slightest observation, that though it might have been selfishness, in the first instance, which gave a peculiar direction to the understanding, yet each of the parties often comes, at last, to entertain a sincere conviction in the truth of